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GALLERY NEWS

WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON
GALLERY OF ART
MARY ATKINS MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS

Rockhill Road at Forty-fifth Street
Kansas City, Missouri

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New Years, July 4th

Thanksgiving and Christmas



THE WINNING OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE

EARLY CHRISTIAN

4TH. TO 5TH. CENTURY, SYRIA

GALLERY NEWS

December 1941

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS: During the month of December and the first half of January, the central and south loan galleries will be installed with a most interesting exhibition. Visitors have frequently been heard to remark that the Gallery has a fine and significant collection, but, alas, it does not own the Mona Lisa, the Blue Boy or the Sistine Madonna and therefore cannot be an important one.

It is true that none of these well-known and popular masterpieces is owned by our Gallery. It is doubtful, also, if a large percentage of our visitors have seen the originals of these paintings and there is a suspicion that their popularity is due to the countless facsimile reproductions that exist. There are many paintings in the European section and objects from the Oriental Department of our own collection that have been extensively featured in international exhibitions, have been cited and praised by critics and have been reproduced in standard books, publications and catalogues innumerable times. To stress and to call attention to this, a group of these objects will be placed in the loan galleries and all their publications and reproductions will be exhibited with them.

It is interesting to note that in the field of painting, our world-famous Raphael Peale After The Bath leads the list with 21 reproductions and has been in six exhibitions recently, including Paris in the summer of 1938, where it was the one American painting to receive the universal praise of all European critics. Since it was rediscovered in the early 1930's, our Titian Portrait of Granvella has been reproduced 16 times, has been in many exhibitions and was invited to the great Venetian Titian Exhibition in 1935. Our Ingres Portrait of LeMoine has been reproduced 15 times and has been in a number of important collections and exhibitions and is his finest early portrait in America. The Rembrandt Youth With a Black Cap has been reproduced 15 times and is in every book on this artist and was invited to the great retrospective show which was to have been held in Amsterdam in 1939. The powerful Goya Omni-ryan has been

reproduced 12 times, has been in all Goya exhibitions in this country and is cited in every book on the artist. Our El Greco Penitent Magdalene, again a recently discovered painting, has been reproduced 10 times and has been in many important exhibitions including the first one-man show of this artist in Paris in 1937. The striking Frans Hals Portrait of a Gentleman has been reproduced 10 times, is listed in all works on this artist and has been in many shows including the great exhibition in Haarlem, Holland of 1937. The Walt Kuhn Blue Juggler of the Friends of Art collection has been reproduced 6 times and is included in two recent books on modern art. Other paintings to be featured include the Claude Lorrain Landscape With a Piping Shepherd, the Bingham, Fishing On the Mississippi, the Virgin and Child by Lorenzo Monaco and the Story of Tobias by Francesco di Giorgio.

The extensive Chinese Collection is rapidly becoming known through the many reproductions of its finest objects in books and periodicals and the inclusion of extensive contributions from the Gallery to every significant Chinese exhibition held in America in the past decade. At times entire shows of material from the collection here have been held in other museums. The extent and quality of our Chinese Department first came to general public notice at the time of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art held in London during 1935-36. This was the largest and most comprehensive exhibition of Chinese art ever held, and likely to be assembled for some time to come. Our Gallery contributed more objects than any other museum or private collector in America, sending 26 items ranging from archaic bronzes to 18th century embroideries.

The great carved Jade Pi heads the list of Chinese objects rapidly attaining international fame with 14 illustrations and numerous references. The unique Bronze Spiral Dragon has been reproduced 10 times and has been in many exhibitions, while among the other bronzes that have attracted special attention is the Bronze Chia with 4 reproductions, the Ku with 5, and the early Sacrificial Ax with 7. Our landscape in ink by Hsia Kuei has been illustrated 6 times and the beautiful early scroll, Palace Ladies Listening to Music, is attaining a well-deserved fame with 6 reproductions.

It is interesting to bear in mind that the great majority of the objects in the Chinese Collection were entirely unknown before they entered the Gallery here. The Jade Pi was excavated only in 1933 and most of the early bronzes came from the soil only during 1934 and 1935.

Our Gallery now has two of the most celebrated Indian Bronzes in America. Because of the beauty of its modeling and the excellence of its craftsmanship, the Gallery Siva is rapidly becoming known as one of the two best examples of this popular conception of the god in America. By far the most famous object in the Indian Collection is the bronze image of the Hindu Goddess Kali. It was acclaimed one of the most striking objects in the great bronze exhibition at Buffalo, appears in the Indian series of University Prints and shares the honors with the Siva as illustrating Indian bronze sculpture in Cheney's recent World History of Art.

In the Persian Field, the Tapestry Woven Rug, being one of only a half dozen such rugs known, has been reproduced 10 times with a full colour plate in the great Persian Survey and has been featured in every important exhibition of Persian art held in America in recent years.

It is hoped that this exhibition, which is a marked innovation in museum shows, will not only prove of interest but will acquaint our visitors with the growing international reputation of the Gallery Collection.

PAINTINGS BY NEW MEXICAN ARTISTS: Opening on December 7th and continuing through January 4th, the north loan gallery will be hung with a group of paintings by New Mexican artists. It is interesting to note that this fascinating Southwestern State of mountains and deserts, with verdant green valleys between, is the home of two of the oldest art colonies in the United States. That of Taos is over forty years old and that of Santa Fe is but a decade younger. Many great names have been associated with these two towns - Robert Henri, George Bellows, Frederick Remington, and of this generation, Sloan, Sterne, Marin, Kroll, Hartely, Davey and O'Keefe.

There is every tradition for painting in this section of our country. The old Indian culture achieved high artistic attainment as is attested by the superb and almost unique murals that have been discovered in a kiva or ceremonial chamber just south of Santa Fe. Later the Spanish settlers furthered the tradition in their religious paintings of Santos and Bultos. It has been recently written: "The conditions that bring forth great art are inherent in the soil, skies, wind, clouds and spaces of the great Southwest. Those who live in it have long felt the eternal character of these vast spaces, silent but vibrant with life and colour, subtle, mysterious, elemental."

The group to be shown in Kansas City was selected from the 28th Annual Exhibition of 1941, held in the Museum of New Mexico of Santa Fe. An attempt has been made to give a cross section of what is being painted in New Mexico today and the selection has been based not on established names but rather on a consideration of distinction, interest and original development. Of especial interest is the canvas Fifth Avenue Critics, 1905, painted only last year by one of the great men of American Art, John Sloan, from an etching made in 1905. Randall Davey, who is well-known to Kansas City as a former teacher at the Art Institute, is represented by Goose Hunters, which recently won the Clarke Prize. Other men to be included are: Kenneth Adams, Josef Bakos, E.L. Blumenschein, McHarg Davenport, Joseph Fleck, Victor Higgins, R. Vernon Hunter, Peter Hurd, Paul Lantz, Will Shuster and Cady Wells, who is also well-known locally.

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: For the anniversary month of December, the Gallery announces its most important acquisition for the year 1941. It is a unique example of Early Christian Sculpture and as far as is known, no other representation of equal significance exists in any public collection. It will be featured as the Masterpiece for December and January.

Dating from the IVth to Vth Century, it comes from Syria which was the birthplace of Christianity. It

is worthy of note that it was at Antioch that the followers of Christ were first called Christians. The sculpture is of a light toned limestone containing shell fragments and from the sturdy flanges along the side and the fact that the carving is pierced through, it must have served as a window grill in some now destroyed church. Syria has not been a Christian nation for thirteen centuries and most of the thousands of religious buildings that once dotted the land have long since been ruined or demolished by the wanton Arabs who used them as stables as long as they remained standing. It is little wonder, then, that practically nothing of the sculptured decoration which once adorned these churches has survived to us.

The identification of the most interesting subject depicted here has been suggested by Dr. Kurt Weitzmann of Princeton University. It represents a mythological scene, The Winning of the Golden Fleece. This fascinating episode is the outcome of the Voyage of the Argonaut, the task self-assumed by Jason to recover the Golden Fleece in order to regain the rightful throne of his father, Aison, which had been usurped by a half-brother, Pelias. In our new sculpture, the central figure of Jason may be seen reaching for the Fleece which is represented as a horned ram in the branches of an oak tree. This was situated in the sacred grove of Ares in the land of the Colchis which, lying at the further end of the Euxine, was ruled over by the king, Aietes. To the left, his sorceress daughter Medea, who has fallen in love with Jason, holds the cup to charm the snake-like dragon which is coiled about the tree, guarding the Golden Fleece. Under her magic spell the dragon will allow Jason to take the Fleece unharmed.

The ship, The Argo, on which the Argonauts sailed, is clearly depicted in the upper right corner. The two figures in the foreground may be identified by their caps and costumes, as the Dioscuri, the sons of Zeus, who took part in the expedition of Jason. The leaning figure on the extreme right holding an arrow and wearing Oriental trousers is perhaps a Colchian. The veiled figure standing behind Medea and reading incantations from a scroll may be an attendant of the king's daughter

or even the priestess, Hekate, to whose cult Medea belonged.

The sculpture is framed by a geometric border in which the so-called swastika alternates with a stylized floral quartrefoil. This motif is seen in the decoration of many Syrian churches, notably that of Babiska and in the recently excavated mosaics of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem which antedates the VIth century. Although the subject matter is unquestionably mythological, there is every reason to believe that it may have had some Christian significance at the remote time it was carved. The boat with its mast in the form of a cross was always the symbol of the Church. Some scholars have seen in the figures one of the earliest examples of the temptation theme of Adam and Eve, carried out in the consistent iconography of Early Christian Art.

Of special significance is the strength and power of the carving which is carried out in almost complete round. It should be considered in no way provincial Roman art, but rather a vigorous, if archaic, representation of a new and vital force, that of early Christian ideals. This new acquisition to the Gallery collection, an unique example of a little known art, adds an enormous distinction to our group of antique sculptures.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES: All lectures are given by Laurence Sickman, Curator of the Oriental Department, and are held in Atkins Auditorium at 8:00 P.M. There is no charge to the Gallery or to the lecture on Wednesday evenings. There will be no lectures on December 24th and 31st and the series will be resumed on January 7th.

December 3rd: Buddhist Art of India. In the lecture on this date, the field is shifted from China to India as the homeland of Buddhism. The next important phases of Far Eastern art that will be taken up in the lectures, is the part that the Buddhist church plays as patron of the artists in China and Japan. Buddhism is the first important institution in China that is of foreign origin and, since the conception of image worship and the type-

forms the images take are rooted in ancient Indian tradition, it is of interest to examine these origins. Moreover, the sculpture of India is, in the best examples, unsurpassed. Although it is as yet little known in the West, it will undoubtedly in time take its proper place among the great sculptures of the world.

December 10th: The Greco-Roman Buddha and the Art of Central Asia. Following the subject of Buddhist art from its origin in India to its various manifestations in the Far East, this lecture will be devoted to the art of the highroad between India and China. By the time the first Buddhist statues and paintings reached China, they had been modified by the arts of many other peoples along the way. One of the most interesting phenomena of eastern art is the development of the Greco-Buddhist school of sculpture in Afghanistan, the ancient kingdom of Gandhara, where the styles of the Greco-Roman world merge with those of the ancient East. This lecture will also cover a brief survey of the main teachings of the Buddhist doctrine and material for the identification of the principal Buddhist deities as represented in art.

December 17th: Archaic Buddhist Art of China - The Great Cave-Temples. In this lecture the subject returns to China with the introduction of Buddhism, the manner in which it became firmly established, and the interesting problem of how the Chinese artists adopted the new art forms to the strong native Chinese tradition.

The material for the study of early Chinese sculpture is especially rich and interesting. Thanks to the custom of building vast cave-temples cut into the solid rock, a great deal has remained into our own times. The first Buddhist sculpture in China is, in its archaic vigor and depth of religious emotion, the supreme religious sculpture of farther Asia.

FRIENDS OF ART: The Annual Meeting of the Friends of Art will be held on Friday, December 5th, at 8:00 P.M. in the Mezzanine Tea Room. At that time the members will vote on the painting to be purchased this year. It is urgently hoped that all members will attend this important meeting. The group of paintings selected by the Submissions Committee will be installed in

Gallery 14 by November 30th and will remain on exhibition through the week. The Director will discuss these paintings at the special member lecture on Thursday morning, December 4th at 11:00 o'clock in the Library.

On Thursday, December 18, early examples from the important Burnap Collection of English Pottery will be brought to the Library and discussed with the members.

WHISTLER PRINTS: The Gallery announces the indefinite loan to the Print Department of the great Harris Whittemore Collection of Whistler Prints. Comprising 624 items, it is the largest known group of the work of Whistler. Harris, the son of the industrialist J.W. Whittemore of Naugatuck, Connecticut, began collecting as early as 1896 when he bought Whistler's famous White Girl which is now on loan at the National Gallery, Washington. Later he concentrated on the graphic work of Whistler, purchasing the Howard Mansfield collection in order to complete his group. It is interesting to note that a number of the prints were originally in the collection of Queen Victoria and bear her collector's mark. Beginning in January, a chronological series of exhibitions of this outstanding collection will be held in the Print Galleries.

GIFT OF FLETCHER MARTIN PAINTING: The Gallery is very happy to announce the gift of Celebration by Fletcher Martin to the collection of contemporary American paintings. The presentation was made by a group of Trustees of the Kansas City Art Institute, who subscribed funds for the purchase. The following Trustees subscribed: Mrs. Henry D. Ashley, Gordon T. Beaham, Jr., Mrs. David T. Beals, Francis M. Bernardin, W.J. Breidenthal, Harry Darby, Don A. Davis, Mrs. John J. Fennelly, Robert B. Fizzell, Parker B. Francis, Paul Gardner, Wallace C. Goffe, Fred Goldman, W. T. Grant, Powell C. Groner, Joyce C. Hall, Porter T. Hall, Henry J. Haskell, Henry C. Haskell, Ernest A. Jaccard, A. R. Jones, Herbert V.

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Celebration has been hung in Gallery 29.

BURNAP COLLECTION OF ENGLISH POTTERY: The installation of Agate, Astbury and Whieldon Ware from the Burnap Collection will continue in the Ceramics Room through December. The popular favorites are the charming Astbury Figures and the superb tea pots and animal sculpture in Agate Ware. Many are also enjoying the rich browns, yellows and greens of the more robust Whieldon Ware. The Gallery continues to receive letters from all over the country congratulating us on this magnificent gift and the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Burnap in presenting it to the Kansas City public.

RADIO PROGRAMS: The Gallery, together with the University of Kansas City, is presenting again this year a series of dramatizations over WDAF. The first program, on November 16th, was the story of our Chinese Temple Ceiling and was written by Laurence Sickman, Curator of Oriental Art. The second, on November 30th, was on Tintoretto and his portrait of Tommaso Contarini, written by Paul Gardner, Director of the Gallery. On Sunday, December 14 at 11:05 P.M., there will be another half-hour broadcast at which time Catherine Ann Mandl's dramatization of The Shah Namah, or History of Persian Kings, will be heard.

In a special Christmas broadcast on Lorenzo di Credi, written by Mr. Gardner, the regular members of the cast will be assisted by the Boy Choir of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral under the direction of Miss Maybelle Glenn. The time for this performance will be announced later in the newspapers.

The actors heard in these programs are students of the

University of Kansas City under the direction of Carl Johnson, head of the department of drama. The broadcasts are produced by Lindsay Hughes, assistant to the Curator of Oriental Art.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERTS:

Of especial interest is the quartet song cycle, "The Persian Garden" by Liza Lehmann based on "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam". It will be presented by members of the opera class at the Kansas City Conservatory of Music under the direction of Miss Constance Eberhardt who is replacing Dr. Frank Laird Waller during his illness. The cast will include Miss Maxine Martin, contralto, who so ably represented Kansas City in the Metropolitan Auditions of the Air; Miss Latonia Barnett, soprano; Duane Spencer, bass; and Irwin Umlauf, tenor.

On December 14, the Conservatory will present their annual Christmas Convocation, a program which increases in popularity each year. Various departments of the school will be represented and the Conservatory Chorus, under the direction of Mr. Stanley Deacon, will sing Christmas music.

No concert has been scheduled in Atkins Auditorium on December 21st, but on December 28th, Harold Eisberg will be presented in a piano recital. Mr. Eisberg is a former pupil of Miss Gertrude Concannon and is now in his second year of study as a scholarship student with Rudolph Ganz in Chicago and is giving his recital while home on Christmas vacation.

In keeping with the holiday season, certain High School a cappella choirs will present Christmas Carols in Kirkwood Hall on Sunday afternoons, December 7 and 14, preceding the regular Atkins Auditorium concerts.

GALLERY NOTES: There will be no regular Wednesday evening openings at the Gallery on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve, and it will also be closed all day Christmas Day and New Years Day.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT: On Saturday afternoon, December 6, the Junior League Children's Theatre will present "Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates" in the Atkins Auditorium at 2:30 p.m. The costumes and sets for this play have been done in authentic 17th century Dutch style, adapted from the paintings of the Dutch "Little Masters", Jan Vermeer, Peter de Hooch and Jan Steen. There is no admission charge to the Gallery or Auditorium on Saturdays.

The following week, on December 13th at 3:00 P.M., the Marionette Players will present "Old Parr", the story of the oldest subject of Charles I of England, inspired by the portrait of Thomas Parr by Peter Paul Rubens in the Gallery Collection.

On Saturday afternoon, December 20, at 3:00 o'clock, there will be a Christmas program plus the next three installments of the serial "Custer's Last Stand".

There will be no Children's programs on Saturday, December 27th.

The Little Museum for Young Moderns will open its Christmas exhibition, "The Origin of the American Christmas" on Saturday, December 6th, to remain throughout December. Our American customs of the Christmas tree and its decorations, the hanging of stockings, yule logs and Santa Claus will be exhibited and explained. Adults as well as children should find it most interesting.

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

Mon., Dec.	1	-	1:00	-	Library - Art Inst., Orient Art.
Tues.	"	2	-	1:00	- Library - Art Inst., Ren. Art.
Tues.	"	2	-	2:00	- Asiatic Study Group
Wed.	"	3	-	8:00	- Lecture - Buddhist Art of India, Mr. Sickman
Thurs.	"	4	-	11:00	- Library - Friends of Art
Thurs.	"	4	-	1:00	- Library - Art Inst., Ren. Art.
Fri.	"	5	-	8:00	- Annual Meeting, Friends of Art
Fri.	"	5	-	2:00	- Auditorium - Women's Auxiliary, Jackson County Medical Society
Sat.	"	6	-	3:00	- Play - "Hans Brinker"
Sun.	"	7	-	7:30	- Concert - Quartet Song Cycle
Mon.	"	8	-	1:00	- Library - Art Inst., Orient. Art
Tues.	"	9	-	10:00	- Library - Book Club
Tues.	"	9	-	1:00	- Library - Art Study Club
Tues.	"	9	-	1:00	- Study Room - Art Inst., Ren. Art.
Wed.	"	10	-	2:00	- Library - Minerva Delphians
Wed.	"	10	-	8:00	- Lecture - The Greco-Roman Buddha & Art of Central Asia - Mr. Sickman
Thurs.	"	11	-	10:00	- Library - Socratic Delphians
Thurs.	"	11	-	1:00	- Library - Art Inst., Ren. Art
Sat.	"	13	-	3:00	- Marionette Play - "Old Parr"
Sun.	"	14	-	7:30	- Concert - Conservatory of Music
Mon.	"	15	-	1:00	- Library - Art Inst., Orient. Art
Tues.	"	16	-	1:00	- Library - Art Inst., Ren. Art
Tues.	"	16	-	2:00	- Asiatic Study Group
Wed.	"	17	-	8:00	- Lecture - Archaic Buddhist Art of China - the Great Cave-Temples, Mr. Sickman.
Thurs.	"	18	-	11:00	- Library - Friends of Art
Thurs.	"	18	-	1:00	- Library - Art Inst., Ren. Art
Sat.	"	20	-	7:00	- Christmas Program and Movie
Thurs.	"	25	-	GALLERY CLOSED ALL DAY CHRISTMAS DAY	
Sat.	"	27	-	No Children's Activities	
Sun.	"	28	-	3:30	- Concert - Harold Eisberg



William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art

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